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ABSTRACT

The packet reviews the assessment and teaching of social skills to persons with special needs and lists a variety of resources and readings. Definitions are provided for seven key terms (e.g., adaptive behavior, behavior disorder, social skills). Frequently asked questions addressing assessment and intervention are answered. Assessment by means of direct observation, commercial instruments, and informal checklists is discussed. A total of 23 resources are listed including publishers, videotapes, multimedia programs, audiovisual materials, games and kits, and print materials for learners. Twenty readings are also listed. (DB)

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SOCIAL SKILLS

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ABSTRACT: This packet reviews the assessment and teaching of social skills from elementary school through adulthood.

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SOCIAL SKILLS

Overview

An area of increased awareness and concern is the social development of special needs persons. Of special interest to those in educational settings is the identification, assessment and modification of student behaviors. The effective teaching of social skills is important in classroom situations. Appropriate social skills have further implications as students make the transition from school to work.

Definitions/Terminology

Adaptive Behavior - that behavior which is considered appropriate for a given individual in a specific context. This term usually refers to behavior that is judged acceptable by authorities, such as teachers, and not in need of modification.

Behavior Disorder - a student with a behavior disorder is one who chronically and markedly responds to his or her environment in socially unacceptable ways. Such behavior disorders include, but are not limited to, excessive fears, explosive reactions, anxieties, withdrawal reactions, perseveration, and compulsive reactions. This does not include students diagnosed as having a severe or profound behavior disorder requiring intensive and prolonged intervention.

Behavior Modification - behavior modification is based on the principle that all behavior is learned and is a function of the consequences the behavior produces. When behavior modification is used by the classroom teacher, it consists of a highly structured, systematic approach to the strengthening and maintaining of desirable behaviors and the elimination or lessening of undesirable behaviors.

Maladaptive Behavior - those behaviors judged as inappropriate or ineffective in a given context, such as the classroom. In general, such behaviors interfere with a student's learning social interaction and lead to discomfort.

Modeling - modeling is really a behavioral modification technique because it uses the same principles. Using this technique, the student learns appropriate behavior(s) by observing and imitating the appropriate behavior(s) of others.

Role Playing - role playing is a technique in which students act out their problems in a less threatening atmosphere while seriously attempting to understand the conflict in their lives. This technique is most valuable with handicapped adolescents because it allows them to reveal behaviors honestly without guilt and shame. Role playing can help students gain insight into their problems because very difficult social situations, e.g., being rejected when asking for a date, can be practiced repeatedly.

Social Skills - Social skills can be defined as those skills necessary to accommodate the demands of society change and are dependent upon a specific social context. It is necessary for individuals to have developed flexible social response mechanisms that allow for behavior to change as the situation demands. An inability to change behavior or respond to changing demands will usually result in social dysfunction. While the level, intensity, nature, and complexity of social-affective skill deficits may vary, it is safe to say that many students will require some social skills instruction in order to function effectively in school or the community (Masters & Mori, 1986).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE CLASSROOM BEHAVIORS?

A. Unacceptable behaviors may vary from situation to situation. Following is a list of common disruptive behaviors:

1. wandering around classroom; out of seat without permission,
2. talking without permission,
3. refusing teacher requests,
4. touching or striking others,
5. bringing attention to oneself thereby distracting others by gestures or vocalizations,
6. taking or damaging others' property,
7. being inattentive (not following directions), and
8. using profanity.

Q. HOW DO I ASSESS AFFECTIVE SOCIAL SKILLS?

A. Assessment can be classified as formal or informal. Formal assessment typically involves standardized instruments. Informal assessment is based upon less standardized techniques. The

advantage of informal assessment instruments in evaluating behavior is that they are ongoing. The ongoing process allows for the development and modification of behavior intervention strategies.

The following are common methods of assessing affective social skills:

1. Direct Observation

   To accurately document the results of his or her observations, the teacher must use some specific method of recording. Techniques for recording observations include the following:

   - Narrative recording: This is a longhand method of recording in which teachers document all student behaviors, the starting and ending time of the observation, student actions, the environmental situation, and the actions of others present.

   - Event recording: Once the target behavior is identified and the teacher is aware of the need to record it, a tally sheet is often used. The teacher merely checks off each incident of the behavior.

   - Duration recording: Duration recording involves recording the length of time that a behavior occurs. Observers often use an electric timer to record when the behavior begins and ends.

   - Interval recording: Interval recording is used to record one or more behaviors within specified time blocks. The selection of prearranged time intervals depends on the type and frequency of behavior to be monitored. Five seconds is usually the shortest interval for recorder reliability and three to five minutes is the longest. When the behavior occurs, the observer makes one notation in the time block. Should the behavior occur more than one time in an interval, that is an indication that the interval is too long.

   - Time sampling: This method involves taking observations after predetermined time periods. Generally, a timer is set for 5 or 10 minutes; when that time elapses, the observer records the behavior the student is exhibiting at that time. Immediate behavior can be recorded for predetermined lengths of time (Masters and Mori, 1986, pp. 261-262).

2. Commercial Instruments

   According to Masters and Mori (1986), despite the common flaws of formal commercial instruments, they can provide

some valuable information to assist the teacher in pinpointing a student's social-affective skill development. While they should not be used in isolation to determine the nature of the problem, they do provide a good supplemental source of information. Among the instruments commonly used are the following:

- The Behavior Rating Profile (Brown & Hammill, 1978) can be used with students from first to twelfth grade. Designed to elicit information from a variety of sources such as parents, teachers, peers, and the students themselves, the Behavior Rating Profile helps the teacher identify settings where inappropriate behavior occurs and settings where it does not occur.

- The Devereux Adolescent Behavior Rating Scale (Spivack, Spotts, & Haimes, 1967), one of three different Devereux scales designed to assess social-affective skill development, can be used with youngsters from 13 to 18 years of age. It is designed to look at factors such as poor emotional control and peer dominance as well as dominance items relating the adolescent's behavior toward adults in the school setting.

- The Pupil Behavior Inventory (Vinter, Sarri, Vorwaller, & Schaefer, 1966) can be employed with youngsters in the seventh to the twelfth grade. The items on the scale are rated by the teacher on a five-point scale. The five categories evaluated by the scale are classroom behavior, academic motivation and performance, social-emotional status, teacher dependence, and personal behavior.

- The Vineland Social Maturity Scale (Doll, 1965) can be used to assess the social competence of individuals from birth to adulthood. The scale is divided into eight categories that include general self-help, eating self-help, dressing self-help, locomotion, communication, occupation, self-direction, and socialization. The Vineland is designed to be administered by interviewing a knowledgeable informant such as a parent or the teacher.

3. Informal Checklists

Teacher-Developed Informal Checklists

One of the best ways for teachers to gather information about the social-affective development of their students is to develop their own informal checklists. Following is a sample checklist that could be used to assess social-affective skills in adolescents. Each checklist must be developed on the basis of the needs of the teacher and the circumstances of the classroom.

Exhibit 8-1 Sample Teacher Checklist for Social Skills from Masters & Mori (1986).

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	ALWAYS
SCHOOL BEHAVIORS			
1. Comes to class on time			
2. Attends to task			
3. Begins assignment on time			
4. Completes assignments			
5. Brings pencil and other materials to class			
6. Obeys classroom rules			
7. Obeys school rules			
PEER INTERACTION			
8. Initiates peer interaction			
9. Interacts positively with peers			
10. Cooperates in group activities			
11. Communicates appropriately with peers			
TEACHER INTERACTION			
12. Seeks attention in an appropriate manner			
13. Reacts appropriately to teacher requests			
14. Interacts positively with teacher			
15. Communicates needs appropriately to teacher			
INTERPERSONAL SKILLS			
16. Views self in positive manner			
17. Understands consequences of behavior			
18. Reacts appropriately to criticism			
19. Reacts appropriately to praise			
20. Has high frustration tolerance			
21. Avoids physical confrontations			
22. Displays appropriate restraint when angry			

23. Requests assistance when necessary
24. Displays control of emotions
25. Uses good manners, e.g., "thank you," "please" (p. 267)

Q. WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP AFTER IDENTIFICATION?

A. Once disruptive behaviors are identified, intervention strategies can be developed to help the student attain appropriate behaviors. Oftentimes handicapped children are not knowledgeable of socially acceptable behaviors. Therefore, they are unable to recognize and interpret cues. This causes them to respond inappropriately.

McCarney (1985) lists the most commonly encountered behavior problems identified by teachers. The book is divided into three sections with observable behaviors in the affective domain identified; goals and objectives for each behavior; and a compilation of interventions for each of the identified 52 behavior problems (see attached sample).

Q. ARE CURRICULUM MATERIALS AVAILABLE WHICH COULD HELP IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE SOCIAL SKILLS?

A. On the following pages are numerous books and articles on social skills development. Some of these books are practical in their approach, while others are more theoretical in nature.

A sample of acceptable social behaviors from the Entry Level Skills Criteria Manual is included in this module. You may already be aware of the ELSC manual's convenient breakdown of the steps for task achievement and references to activity materials. There are several sections on social behaviors in the ELSC.

Donn Brolin's Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach is included in the attached sample pages as well. Here the Personal-Social Skills sections, again with objectives, activities/strategies, and adult/peer roles clearly delineated, can be a very valuable teaching tool.

Social skills are addressed in several career development texts under the heading of employee relations. The Kimbrell & Vineyard (1983) text, Entering the World of Work, takes positive social behaviors into the job world and talks of respect to others and self, relating well with co-workers, and showing a positive attitude. This text has activity/discussion reviews at the end of each chapter to get everyone in the class involved.

As a high school course, The New Model Me is a curriculum resource to help students gain an understanding of themselves and why people behave as they do.

The New Model Me can stand alone as a semester's course in the study of human behavior, or it can be used as supplementary material in courses such as social studies, psychology, health science, and family living. Although designed to reach all adolescents in grades 9 through 12, The New Model Me is also effective in helping those with behavior problems.

References

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Rowe, J. R., Pasch, M. & Hamilton, W. F. (1983). The new model me 2nd ed. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.

SAMPLES OF RESOURCES/ORDER FORMS

Educational Design, Inc.
47 W. 13 Street
New York, NY 10011 (800) 221-9372
Life Skills: Attitudes in Everyday Living
Me and Others

Hubbard
P. O. Box 104
Northbrook, IL 60062 (312) 272-7810
Films/videotapes
The Good Life - 10 social living skills
appropriate for adolescents & adults

Love Publishing Company
1777 South Bellaire Street
Denver, CO 80222 (303) 757-2579
Interactive tutorials (computers)
Social Development (i.e., Society, Nuclear & Extended Families, Isolate Play, Cooperative Play)

Paperbacks for Educators
Route 2, Box 80, Ridge Road
Ballwin, MO 63011
Books listed under "Assertiveness," "Sexuality," "Self-Esteem," "Self-Awareness," "Interpersonal Relationships," "Decision Making"

Pro-ed
5341 Industiral Oaks Blvd.
Austin, TX 78735 (512) 892-3142
The Walker Social Skills Curriculum (w/videotapes)
The ACCEPTS Program for handicapped & nonhandicapped children grades K-6

James Stanfield Publishing
P. O. Box 1983
Santa Monica, CA 90406 (800) 421-6534
SOCIAL SKILLS CURRICULUM - "Marathon" is a multimedia program designed to teach LD, EH, and EMR secondary students over 150 appropriate specific social behaviors. Lessons depict real-life situations. The kit includes teacher's guides, student workbooks written at the third grade level and two motivational filmstrips. For more information about "Marathon" contact: James Stanfield Publishing, P. O. Box 1983, Santa Monica, CA 90405; phone (800) 421-6534.

B. L. Winch & Associates
45 Hitching Post Dr., Bldg. 23H
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274 (213) 539-6430
"Whole Child Catalog" filmstrips/movies (varying ages)
Self-Concept/values
Behavioral Problems
Student Leadership
Communication Games Kits

Vocational Education Services
840 State Road 46 Bypass, Room 110
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405 (812) 335-6711
ATTN: Loan Service

Daily Living and Personal/Social Skills

Learner Materials--Audiovisual

Basic Skills Series
AV050004 (FILMSTRIP/TAPE)
Interpretive Education, Kalamazoo, Michigan. 1974.
Daily Living Schools
$94.95
This filmstrip/cassette series discusses the importance of money in our society, more primitive means of exchange and the importance of banks and checks.

Behavior Management: A Training Module
AV050216 (Print)
Wright, Jan.
Child-Adult Resource Services, Rockville, Indiana. 198-.
Behavior Modification, Behavior Change, Training.
Covers several methods of behavior change including counseling, behavioral observation, chemotherapy, behavior modification, planning and reinforcement schedules. Part of the MR-DD Training Modules Series from Child-Adult Resource Services (CARS), (AV050202-AV050219).

Clearing Up Misunderstandings
AV050081 (FILM)
Universal Education and Visual Arts, Universal City, California.
Interpersonal Relationships, Job Performance.
$225
"No man is an island unto himself" and no one is too old to learn this. A young man rejects help on his job assignment. As a result, he discovers he cannot complete the task on schedule. Illustrates how misunderstandings may occur on the job and how they may be resolved.

Invisible Children, The
AV050097 (FILM)
Learning Corporation of America, New York, New York.
Attitudes, Disabilities.
$350
A touching, effective attempt to encourage students to understand and accept their handicapped peers.

Me and Others
AV050079 (FILMSTRIP/TAPE)
Educational Design Inc., New York, New York. 1976.
Interpersonal Competence.
$119

A program that enables students to develop a self-awareness, an understanding of feelings, an awareness of others and a sense of communication in order to improve their relationships with others and their ability to make career and life decisions.

Mimi: This Is Who I Am
AV050010 (FILMSTRIP/TAPE)
Guidance Associates, White Planes, New York. 1977.
Disabilities, Attitudes.
This documentary program describes a young woman's experience as a physically disabled person. Through her perceptive comments, students, teachers and parents will gain insights into the special problems of the physically disabled.

Put Yourself in My Place
AV050095 (FILM)
Guidance Associates, White Planes, New York.
Attitudes.
$69.50
This program explores the subject of individual differences in a helpful, positive way by letting students express their own views about "being different". Students discuss how their sense of individuality has been influenced by their differences and how they have learned to accept and cope with their differences.

Self-Care Female Series
AV050002 (FILMSTRIP/TAPE)
Interpretive Education, Kalamazoo, Michigan. 1975.
Hygiene, Daily Living Skills.
The five filmstrip/cassette series shows exactly the procedures that young women should go through to keep up good grooming. Narration and demonstration are provided by young ladies actually going through the necessary steps.

Self-Care Male Series
AV050003 (FILMSTRIP/TAPE)
Interpretive Education, Kalamazoo, Michigan. 1977.
Hygiene, Daily Living Skills.
$82.95
A unique program designed to meet the needs of adolescent young men at a time when personal appearance and grooming is becoming ever more important. The series shows the young man how he can best obtain good grooming habits with the least amount of time and money.

Learner Materials--Print

Activities of Daily Living Curriculum for Handicapped Adults
IC050747
Magic Valley Rehabilitation Services, Incorporated; College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, Idaho. 1978.
Curriculum Guides, Teaching Methods, Basic Skills, Disabilities, Daily Living Skills, Group Homes.

Comprehensive curriculum to be used primarily in group and sheltered homes for handicapped adults. Included in the curriculum are such basic skill areas as money handling, measurement, telling time, reading, writing,

Learner Materials--Games and Kits

Department Store Math
GA050007 (GAME)
Creative Teaching Associates, Fresno, California. 1979.
$9.95
Students practice basic math skills while learning how to make purchases, compute change, and use a store catalog.

Janus Job Interview Kit
KI050012 (KIT)
Jew, Wing; Tong, Robert.
Janus Book Publishers, Hayward, California. 1976.
Masters for forms, interview cards, job ticket book, teacher's guide.
This kit provides students with practice in job interviews. Provides basic materials to conduct simulated job interviews for 30 different jobs. Designed for students who will enter job market with twelfth grade education or less and seek jobs as non- or low-skilled workers. Emphasis on senior high special needs students.

Pay Day
GA050002 (GAME)
Parker Brothers, Beverly, Massachusetts. 1975.
Daily Living Skills
$9.95
This game is designed to teach students about savings and loan accounts, lottery tickets, daily savings time, elections and interest. 2-4 players, ages 8-adult.

Purchase
GA050012 (GAME)
Creative Teaching Associates, Fresno, California. 1979.
Mathematics.
$9.95
PURCHASE helps students learn to make correct change; keep financial records of income, expenditures, and balances; reconcile cash on hand with the records, and make strategy decisions based on probability.

Sale
GA050010 (GAME)
Creative Teaching Associates, Fresno, California. 1979.
Mathematics.
$9.95
Students calculate savings as they move around the game board keeping a record of money spent on sale and non-sale items. Operational skills are reinforced as students try to reconcile cash on hand with expenditures and beginning balance.

Additional Readings

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